

## Kant

The end of the seventeenth century was a witness to the age of Enlightenment, when a revolution in science, philosophy and culture came to replace traditional values. Faith in reason and its power to control nature grew, and the search for useful knowledge that could practically improve our lives started. Kant was at the center of all this, contributing to the rise of science and its separation from theology. Kant lived at a time when science, the mother of determinism, was gaining success, and "everything was predictable". Kant reacted to this because he knew it posed a threat to our vision of ourselves. Is there a place for freedom if everything is determined? Kant worried about determinism because it meant we have no hand in anything. Science threatened to view that morality required freedom. We must be free in order to choose. If we aren't free we aren't responsible.

Kant will commit to the sovereignty of reason. He joined rationalism and empiricism into one critical philosophy. He believed there should be compatibility between science, morality, and religion. He believed morality applies to all rational beings, and thus laws of morality should be universal.

### Moral law:

The imperatives that we impose on ourselves are evidence that freedom exists. When I say, "I should do this" or "I ought not do that" it means there is a possibility of acting otherwise. Therefore it is outside necessity, and is in fact contingent. Since we have the ability to satisfy this duty, and the power to change our behaviors, then we must be free. But to what extent are we free? It is true that we are determined by many causes (biological, psychological...). However, we don't feel that we are, and we don't feel like a part of the world of causality. Rather, we feel we can do what we want to do. We feel we ought or ought not to do somethings insofar as we feel a moral responsibility.

For Kant causality is not external to us (not a characteristic of the world), rather it is produced by our mind. Causality is one of the twelve categories of the mind, among space, time, contradiction... We don't experience causality external to us, however we think in terms of cause and effect. This is how comprehension is by nature. Causality is a priori in our minds independent of experience.

Freedom is not only the power to choose but it is the independence of the will from external or internal causes. It is will as reason directs, and as such we can initiate new possibilities. What guides the will? Kant believes we are subject to rationality and thus do whatever our reason dictates. Therefore, we generate our own moral law.

Only a good will is good without qualification.

Unqualified good choice is good under all circumstances. It is unconditional.

What morally counts are not the consequences of the action but the intention.

Only acts done from duty have moral worth.

Will is the power to choose based on principles

A Good will is a disposition to adopt the right source of policies.

What is the object (most important feature) of a rational will?

Reason. And not desire!

Action cannot always produce the object of desire.

Actions that express unqualified good will and dutiful actions. In other words, we are doing our duty when we act from good will.

This is the Formula of universal law.

To be good is not to act according to desire.

To be good is to be rational.

Goodness depends on reason.

What is good is what is necessarily rational to choose.

Good will becomes the commitment to behave morally. This commitment has an unqualified moral value.

However, it does not mean that if we have this commitment that we are good people. We can be morally good but may lack moral virtue.

We think that qualities make a good person. While they may help us achieve our good will goal, qualities have nothing to do with being a morally good person.

These qualities are not necessary for morality. Intelligence, courage, and etc... are not good in themselves. It depends on what these talents and temperaments are put to use on.

Additionally, actions done out of sympathy and pity have no moral worth. The same applies to actions done out of fear or anger. They are morally neutral. They may lack a good will (latent intentions) and therefore fail to be morally good.

(Happiness is not a goal, as it is self-interest.)

Gifts of fortune cannot be good either unless they are used with pure good will.

Qualities conducive to the good will have no intrinsic unconditional worth because they depend on the situation. "Good will is necessarily good [unconditionally] by virtue of its willing only."

"Concept of duty contains the idea of a good will."

~~Humans have a capacity to act according to a plan that resonates with reason.~~

We can differentiate between two types of action: acting according to duty and acting from duty.

According to duty : when duty is not the intention : ex guy who unbolts a door to save himself but ends up saving others.  
has no moral worth

From duty : gives to charity not because he wants to but because he has to.  
Intention is to act dutiful not from self-interest.

Person with good will will submit his will to : "Can you will that your maxim be a universal law? If not, that maxim must be repudiated because it cannot fit as a principle in a universal legislation."

Kant draws a distinction between what I want and what I ought to do.  
Moral actions are not spontaneous.

There is a necessity to act out of reverence for the universal law. Therefore we must first submit our will to a test of reason before acting.

When we value something it is not conditionally or as a means to an end. It is good for itself.

Good will is that whose decisions are determined by moral law, and acts out of respect for it only.

Morality is rooted in reason.

Reason must guide my behavior.

Moral principles is a command of reason to ourselves.

“Each person’s own reason is the legislator and executor of the moral law that it is authoritative.”

Imperatives:

Reason issues hypothetical and categorical imperatives.

These imperatives are commands. They express rational constraints.

Hypothetical imperatives involve actions that are good merely as a means to an end. If you want A you have to do B. It is a conditional and relative means to an end, conditioned by desire.

Categorical imperative that which represents an action as objectively of itself.

it is unconditional command of reason, that can become a universal law. It is a necessity of reason to follow categorical imperatives.

e.g. not to kill for profit.

“... only possible supreme moral principle and we are rationally bound to follow it.”

We have to act reasonably and cannot will two things that are inconsistent.

Kant is opposed to utilitarianism in which the consequences of an act are crucial. For Kant it is wrong that we should be obligated by consequence, action should not be conditional.

Consequences aren’t in our control anyway, only will is.

Categorical imperatives apply to all rational beings.

Do A. (unconditional.)

Universal law formula: act only according to a maxim that can be a universal law.

Acting from duty is acting with respect for the law and acceptance of the maxim.

A moral law is objective, while a maxim is subjective. A maxim is a rule the agent gives himself according to his principle. My maxim could be different from yours. If it is a rule set by my own reason only, then it may be contrary to universal law. Only when my maxim is valid for everyone does it concur with the universal law.

(Objectively necessary is valid for every rational being. Something subjectively necessary is a preference.)

Logical contradiction

perfect duty to ourselves: e.g. suicide: as a universal law it will contradict the universal law of nature

perfect duty towards others: e.g. borrowing money and not returning it: as a universal law we would have a world where no one trusts anyone enough to lend money, so it's contradicting its own aim

perfect duties are expressed as negatives: do not kill yourself, you ought not to lie...

Contradictions  
of the will

imperfect duties towards ourselves: e.g. indulging in pleasures rather than developing talents  
-contradicts with the will that commands we develop our talents

imperfect duties towards others: e.g. not helping out others in times of need, will lead to not getting sympathy and consoling you need when you are down if it became a universal law.

imperfect duties are expressed in a positive manner: you have to develop your talents...

A maxim cannot be universal if it contains either a contradiction in conception (logical) or a contradiction of the will.

2nd Formulation

"Act so that you treat humanity whether in your own person or that of another always as an end and never as a means only."

3rd Formulation Formula of Autonomy

"Always act in harmony with the idea of the will of every rational being as a will that legislates universal law."

Autonomy is a characteristic of rational beings.

Always check whether I could will that everyone can act the same way. Same moral law should apply to everyone